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INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS KINSHASA 000437

SIPDIS

FOR WHA/CCA

E.O. 12958; NA

TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [EUN](#) [CU](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: MAY 21 - DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE CUBAN PEOPLE

REF: (A) STATE 45972; (B) STATE 46997

¶1. As background in responding to reftels, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has warm relations with Cuba.

In fact, former President Laurent Kabila, whose son Joseph is the DRC's current head of state, fought alongside Che Guevara in the 1960's in the eastern Congo in Guevara's ill-fated African adventure to oust military dictator (and former U.S. ally) Joseph-Desire Mobutu (later Mobutu Sese Seku). With Kabila's 1997 triumph over Mobutu after a conflict that lasted some 30 years, pro-Cuban Congolese are in most key government positions. Nonetheless, attitudes towards Cuba are changing slowly as the old guard is replaced by a new generation of leaders.

¶2. Charge approached Mangenda Tshibangu, deputy chief editor of Le Potentiel, a prominent Kinshasa daily, who has agreed in principle to publish an op-ed piece on the Day of Cuban Solidarity in the newspaper's May 21 edition. Embassy is translating into French the op-ed piece provided by the Department. Other materials will be sent as a press packet to major media outlets and will also be posted on Embassy's bilingual website. Finally, although occurring after the Day of Cuban Solidarity, on May 24 DCM will speak on Cuba to a group of university students.

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